REMARKS

The above amendment and these remarks are responsive to the Office Action of Examiner James A. Kramer, dated 10 Oct 2006.

Claims 1-7 and 9-17 are in the case, none as yet allowed.

35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1-7 and 9-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Barnes et al. (U.S. Patent 5,970,475, hereinafter, Barnes), in view of Cukor et al. (U.S. Patent 5,168,444, hereinafter, Cukor) and Maners (U.S. Patent 6,507,826).

Applicants invention relates to a method and system for

invoice authorization by the original requester (that is, individual employee) with invoices presented to the requester in a particularly useful and user friendly manner whether such invoices are received hard copy or by EDI. These concepts are explained in applicants' specification, for example, at page 16, line 20 to page 19, line 10.

Cukor teaches an application for reducing shipping paperwork. That is, scanning and imaging of receipt documents is provided. Cukor discusses early invoicing, but does not teach support of a workflow including purchase order, confirming payment of invoices, then paying them. Cukor is an image processing application.

Maners is about invoice processing, but does not reference imaging at all. It does refer to 'confirming payment authorization,' but there is no mention of how this is to be done, other than a reference to the following:

"Company 1's system determines that there is a match between invoice information received and a purchase order information originally created by Company 1."

Maners teaches the art how to reduce the number of paper

invoices by electronically processing them rather than loading paper invoices via imaging. It does not refer to any difference between negative and positive confirmation, and doesn't teach such by implication. In Maners, the implication is that if there is a match between the invoice received and the purchase order, the invoice will be paid.

Barnes relates to a supplier catalog, maintained by the supplier at the supplier site, where orders are processed. Security limits who can log on from the customer site to the supplier site. The user pre-authorized (which is why he has an identifier) to use the system. Barnes includes the following statement:

> "*FIG. 5 illustrates the basic transactions that the EC System 10 can execute. The Procurement System 12 sends purchase orders 64 to the Supplier System 16, while the Supplier System 16 issues sales invoices 62 to the Procurement System 12. The goods/services ordered by the user 12 are supplied, at 64 to the user. The purchase order information is stored, or may be retrieved, at 66 from the Supplier's Legacy System 44, 44'. After a shipment has been made to the user, the user can select how to pay the invoice, e.g., by*

creditor purchase card, check, Legacy System, or ACH."

In Barnes, there is no mention of automatic payment, and no
mention of a confirmation process, either negative or
positive. Instead, the burden is on the user paying the
invoice, and selecting the payment type.

Distinguishing all of Cukor, Maners, and Barnes,
applicant's specification and claims are related to the
combination of invoice image processing and negative and
positive confirmation processing. In the negative
confirmation process, the user has to take action only if
goods are not received.

Further, applicants invention relates to the process of
enabling individuals who ordered the original goods or
services for their own use to ensure that payment is made,
or not made, based on their being able to view the original
invoice images, and supports both EDI and manual processing.

In the following chart, applicants parse claim 1 with
respect to the primary reference, Barnes, along with Cukor,
Maners, and Kolling, each as cited by the Examiner. This
parsing of claim 1 points out several distinctions between

applicant's invention and the cited art, and several claim

limitations which have not been addressed in the Office

Action.

Claim 1	Barnes	Cukor, Maners, Kolling
[A] A method for processing invoices by having the individual employee of an enterprise creating an original order for goods and services for end-use by said individual employee determine that a resulting invoice should be paid or not, comprising the steps of:	Preamble, but Barnes not cited for this teaching.	Preamble, none of the references cited for this teaching.
[B] receiving at an enterprise accounting and catalog system from said individual employee a requisition for goods or services from a vendor	Barnes Fig 5 and Col. 8, lines 36-67.	

[C] for end-use by said individual employee;	Barnes col 8, lines 55-56 cited for sending the confirmation request to the purchaser (individual employee creating the original order). [Office Action, p. 2.]	
[D] said enterprise accounting and catalog system preparing from said requisition a purchase order;	[Barnes Fig. 5, column 8, lines 49-52 and column 13, lines 5-10] However, Examiner does not state the purchase order is prepared from a requisition submitted by the end-user employee.	
[E] said enterprise accounting and catalog system submitting said purchase order selectively as one of an EDI message and a paper purchasing document to said vendor;	Barnes Fig. 5, column 8, lines 49-52 and column 13, lines 5-10 cited for submitting a purchase order, but not cited for teaching a system processing both EDI and paper purchasing documents.	

[F] receiving from a first vendor an invoice for said goods or services as an electronic invoice for processing by said enterprise accounting and catalog system ;	Barnes Fig. 5 and column 8, lines 50-53 cited for receiving an invoice, but not cited for receiving an electronic invoice. Applicants note that there is no reference to imaging in Barnes.	
[G] receiving from a second vendor an invoice for goods or services as a paper invoice for processing to said enterprise accounting and catalog system	Barnes Fig. 5 and column 8, lines 50-53 cited for receiving an invoice, but not cited specifically for receiving a paper invoice nor for scanning the image.	Cukor, col. 6, lines 33-36
[H] by accounts payable personnel other than said individual employee;	Not cited for this teaching.	Not cited for this teaching.
[J] storing said invoice image in an image store	Examiner notes this is not taught by Barnes.	Cukor, col. 6, lines 33-36 and col. 8, lines 5-30.
[K] keying said image to invoice data;		Cukor, col. 8, lines 5-30
[L] said enterprise accounting and catalog system communicating by electronic mail a plurality of	Not cited.	Not cited

[M] confirmation requests to said individual employee creating original orders for goods or services for end-use by said individual employee,	Examiner cites Barnes column 8, lines 55-56 for the confirmation request. However, applicant's argue that there is in Barnes no teaching of a confirmation process – only that the user selects the method of payment, which is a different concept from confirmation of receipt of goods.	
[N] each said request instructing said individual employee to log on to said enterprise accounting and catalog system, including said invoice data and a link to said invoice image,	Not cited.	Not cited.

| [O] and specifying that each said invoice is subject selectively to negative confirmation and positive confirmation processing | The Examiner states "...Barnes does not teach situations where an invoice can be paid without confirmation (i.e. negative confirmation)." [Office Action, page 4], and refers to Maners for that teaching.

The Examiner also states that Barnes, column 23, lines 28-43 teaches that the confirmation can be either negative or positive [Office Action, page 3]. However, applicants assert that Barnes makes no explicit or implicit teaching of confirmation processing. Rather, Barnes teaches selecting how the payment is to be made. | "Manners teaches a type of invoice based on orders issued out of a company's purchasing computer system which is part of the company's accounting computer system. In this type of invoice is dependent on previously generated orders. (See column 5, lines 40-58). In other words, Manners teaches a system which includes both positive and negative confirmation."

Applicants argue (below) that Maners does not teach both negative and positive confirmation. |

		It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Barnes to further include the capability of having invoice dependent on previously generated orders (i.e. negative confirmation processing). [Office Action, page 4.] Applicants traverse on this point. Maners is not teaching negative confirmation. Just because an invoice is generated via a purchase order does not mean it should automatically be paid.

[P] said negative confirmation processing for a first confirmation request including advising said individual employee via e-mail that said invoice is confirmed unless specifically not approved by said individual employee, and said positive confirmation processing for a second confirmation request including advising said individual employee that said invoice will be confirmed upon entry by said individual employee of approval;	This e-mail advise to end-user individual employee not cited.	Not cited.
[Q] providing at a user workstation a search interface in said enterprise accounting and catalog system for said individual employee to enter criteria and have links to images of invoices that match said criteria be displayed at said user workstation; and	End-user individual employee entry of criteria and display of linked images not cited.	Not cited.

[R] responsive to selection of a link by said individual, displaying said invoice image for approval by said individual creating said original order selectively by said negative confirmation and positive confirmation processing.	Not cited.	Not cited.

Summary:

With respect to claims 1-7 and 9-17, as discussed in clause D of the above chart, none of the references, or their combination, teach that the purchase order is prepared from a requisition that is submitted by the individual end-user employee where that same individual end-user employee also receives a confirmation request via e-mail which specifies that the confirmation is to be processed either as positive confirmation or negative confirmation. There is no differentiation between negative and positive confirmation.

With respect to claims 1-7 and 9-17, as discussed in

the above chart clauses E, F, G and H, none of the

references, or their combination, teach a system which

processes both paper and EDI invoices to the end user, some

for negative and others for positive confirmation.

With respect to claims 1-7 and 9-17, as discussed in

the above chart clauses L, M, N, O, and P, none of the

references, or their combination, teach that both positive

and negative confirmation requests are sent by E-mail to

end-user employees with instructions to log-on and process

the requests, some as positive and others as negative

confirmations. The citation at Col. 5, lines 40-58 of

Maners only discusses two types of orders: those tied to

purchase orders and those which are not. There is no

implication that there is a negative or positive

confirmation; only that an invoice tied to a purchase order

is 'validated real-time', which seems to imply positive

confirmation, but certainly not negative confirmation. The

Examiner's reference [Office Action, page 4] to Maners Col.

5, lines 40-58 is not, applicants argue, properly placed.

Maners is not teaching negative confirmation. Just because

an invoice is generated via a purchase order does not mean

it should automatically be paid.

With respect to claims 1-7, 11-17, as discussed in the above chart clauses Q and R, none of the references, or their combination, teach that the end-user employee may input invoice criteria and have links displayed in response to the criteria, with selection of a link presenting to the end-user employee an image of the invoice, selectively for positive confirmation and negative confirmation. There is no reference in the cited art to displaying links, and the Examiner asserts none – having apparently overlooked this limitation in rejecting claims 1-7, and 11-17.

The Examiner refers to Barnes, asserting that Barnes teaches that an original user confirms the vendor invoice using negative and positive confirmation. Applicants traverse on this point.

The Examiner states [Office Action, page 2] the following:

"Barnes further teaches a confirmation request to the purchaser (individual employee creating the original order)(see for example column 8, lines 55-56). Examiner further notes that the confirmation by the user can be either negative confirmation or positive

confirmation (see for example column 23, lines 28-43)."

Applicants agree that Barnes teaches that the goods or services ordered by an individual user are supplied to the user (see Barnes, Col. 8, lines 52-53), and that the user, after shipment has been made to the user, can select how to pay the invoice. (Barnes, Col. 8, lines 55-56).

However, as applicants have previously argued, Barnes does not teach that a confirmation request is sent to the user which may be either a negative or a positive confirmation request. The Examiner refers to Barnes at column 23, lines 28-43 for that teaching. However, this is what Barnes teaches:

"Numerous accounting options (138a)(FIG. 20) are available to an administrator by electing the "Accounting Setup" module 138 in FIG. 13. These include setting up and maintain[ing] bank accounts 138b (FIG. 21), as well as setting up and maintaining supplier payments 138c (FIG. 22). Thus, for example, the administrator can, here, select the mode of payment for goods/services ordered, i.e., purchasing card or ACH payment. Other pre-arranged options can, clearly,

also be included."

"The payment module procedure 141 flowchart is
shown in FIG. 23, and becomes accessible by electing
the "Payment" option in FIG. 13. In the example, the
payments can be entered on the 'payment log' of the
supplier. After the payment decision as been made
encrypted payment instructions are sent to the ACH
gateway 50. After <u>confirmation of payment has been</u>
<u>received</u> from the gateway 50 the transaction is posted
to the buyer's legacy system 46." [Barnes, Col. 23,
lines 28-43, emphasis and correction added.]

It is clear that in the above quoted material from Barnes,
Barnes is teaching that the supplier, not the end-user, is
<u>confirming that payment has been received</u>, <u>not</u> that end
users are providing confirmation of receipt of goods or
services for some invoice instances by negative confirmation
and for other invoice instances by positive confirmation.

With respect to Cukor, applicants argue that Cukor does
not teach both negative and positive confirmation processing
by an individual employee who is both the originator of an
invoice for and the end user of a purchased commodity or

service, as distinguished from accounts payable personnel, or other personnel who are not the end user of the purchase commodity or service. Neither does Barnes, a conclusion previously argued.

Thus, applicants note that none of the references cited specify that an employee who is the end user of a commodity or service, as distinguished from accounts payable or other personnel, is the one who originates the requisition and confirms the vendor invoice using a process which supports both positive and negative confirmation.

Applicants whole process is structured to enable end-users who request a service or commodity to provide confirmation according to a specified approval process: either positive or negative confirmation. To enable end users to function in such a capacity, not being A/P or purchasing personnel and trained in the use of electronic or paper work flow executed by such personnel, applicants have provided a specific work flow that is designed for their use, and includes the steps set forth in the claims, as amended.

Applicants request that the rejection of claims 1-7 and

9-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the above amendments be entered and the case passed to issue with claims 1-7, and 9-17.

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the Application in

condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Sincerely,

T. A. Aber, et al.

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